Receivership Cannot Save Hopeless Austria's Case

With Vienna Dependent on the Fragment of Empire She Wants Permission to Join Germany ---Great Britain Willing, but France and Slavic States Object, Foreseeing Danger From Their Union, Which Would Formidably Increase Germany's Man Strength and Give Her Frontiers on the Danube.

By FRANK H. SIMONDS.

RECENT despatches from various European capitals have served to demonstrate that the Austrian "mess" has once more become a dangerous factor in the European situation. Thus we have the spectacle of a whole State plunged into misery beyond description, bankrupt without hope of future solvency, calmly informing the world of its purpose to go upon a strike, to turn itself over to its recent conquerors as a bankrupt railway might be delivered by its officials into the hands of a receiver.

This Austrian mess remains, therefore, one of the permanent problems of European statesmanship. What is Europe going to do about it? To answer the question it is necessary to review briefly the facts in this most amazing and distressing situation. To begin at the beginning: What was the problem as it was presented to the Paris conference exactly two years ago? We shall need to answer this question frankly and fully, because one of the gravest indictments brought against the peacemakers is that they "balkanized" Middle Europe. To put the thing comparatively, the Congress of Vienna, in 1815, failing to make a durable settlement, after the Napoleonic upheaval, because it neglected the element of nationality, the Conference of Paris, in the opinion of many of its critics, failed equally disastrously because it neglected the economic element, and nowhere more completely than in the case of the old Austrian Empire.

But in point of fact is this criticism valid? At the moment when the Paris conference assembled there was, in reality, no Austrian Empire left. The "balkanization" so bitterly criticised had actually taken place. The Czecho-Slovak State was already taking form, geographically as well as politically. The Southern Slavs and the Poles had broken away, the Rumanians were looking across non-existent frontiers which had once separated the Hapsburg Latins from their brethren of free Rumania with unmistakable longing to achieve race unification. And such unification had been promised by the Allies when Rumania entered the war, as far back as 1916.

Establishment of Frontiers Task Of the Peace Makers at Paris

In point of fact all that was left for the Paris conference—and it was in itself no minor task—was to establish frontiers between the various races which had constituted the Hapsburg Empire, but had long struggled for independence or for union with the major fraction of their brethren in other countries. To determine what lands should fall to Poland, to Rumania, to Jugo-Slavia, to Italy and to Czecho-Slovakia, this was the extent of the duty and of the opportunity of the makers of the Paris agreements.

Such allocations having been made there remained two fragments, inhabited by the Austrian-German and the Magyar races, which had been the dominant minorities in the two halves of the old empire. But there was no possibility of preserving union between these two fragments, because they were already quarrelling over territories on their own marches and were destined to follow quite different political directions shortly, Austria tending toward a Socialist regime, Hungary, after a brief Bolshevist experiment, destined to fall completely under reactionary control.

It is plain that could the Paris conference have preserved the structure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire it would have much simplified the entire economic problem, for, despite the fact that the old Dual Empire was a crazy patchwork of races and tribes, it was a pretty harmonious economic whole in which there were all the elements necessary to make a prosperous State. More than this, centuries of association, the industrial development of the nineteenth century, the construction of railways had tended to make the whole interdepedent to an extent which insured grave dangers for the future if the several portions were not only separated from the whole but also walled in by tariff barriers.

But it was totally beyond the power of the Paris conference to preserve this unity because of the agelong hostility between the tribes, and because also the preservation of the unity carried with it a continuing menace to Italy, at least in the minds of Italian statesmen. This latter circumstance is not important, because even if Italian hostility had not existed the conditions within the old empire would have prevented the saving of old integrity. Austria-Hungary was doomed the moment German defeat was assured. It was, in reality, to escape this doom that Austria, with German approval, had risked the world war.

Racial Rather Than Economic Lines Ruled in Breaking Up of Empire

The liquidation, however, was bound to follow racial rather than economic lines, because the races were broken up into political divisions which were oddly unrelated to economic circumstances. In the adjustment it was at once clear that certain races would find a unity which would at once satisfy both political and economic necessities. Thus the union of the southern Slavs, formerly subjects of the Hapsburgs, with the Serbs created a State which is capable within itself of economic self sufficiency. The same is true of the Rumanians of Transylvania, the Banat and the Bukovina who passed to the old Rumanian State and also of the Austrian Poles who entered the new Polish republic.

By these three transactions there were removed from the old Austro-Hungarian Empire three border areas which were economically essential to the remaining fractions, but were capable, in conjunction with the populations to which they had been joined, of becoming economically prosperous. The same state of facts exists for the much smaller areas which passed to the Italian State as a result of Austrian collapse and the subsequent agreement made at Rapallo with the Jugo-Slavs.

If you conceive that people of the same race have the right to determine their own political allegiance, to unite to form a political partnership, if you assume the justice and the soundness of that process of national consolidation which in the last century led to the creation of a United Italy and a German Empire, then the case of the Poles, the Rumanians and the southern Slavs, as well as the Italians of the Hapsburg Empire, is established, since they merely exercised their own rights in deserting their old and enforced Hapsburg allegiance for membership in their own national states. In any event, there was no power in the Paris conference to prevent such a desertion.

The single arguable thesis combatting this process of national integration is presented by the Hungarians, who assert, with perfect justice, that the Hungarian State which existed before 1914 and persisted right down to the end of the war was economically a distinct unit, possessing all the physical circumstances of an independent State. That subdividing it, by transferring the various minority races to their natural political allegiances, created a State which was economically and, for that matter, politically impossible. In other words, the Magyars argue that the State itself constituted the unit, that the accident of the presence of various minority populations was unimportant.

Magyars, Confident of Self-Help, Indifferent to Austria's Plight

In point of fact, this Hungarian thesis did not and could not weigh at Paris. Even if it had been sympathetically heard, there was no power at Paris to restore that unity, which had collapsed with the defeat of the Hapsburg armies in Italy. All that Paris could do was to attempt to supervise the drawing of frontiers in such fashion as to see that the new frontiers so far as possible followed the actual frontiers between races. And, all things considered, Paris did this work honestly, if in certain notable instances with too little regard for anything but racial considerations.

Once the border tribes had been set off there still remained three racial fragments in the old Hapsburg area which constituted separate units themselves. These were the Czecho-Slovaks, the Hungarians and the Austrian Germans. Combined they constituted a solid block of territory, including a little less than three-fifths of the population of the old empire, some 28,000,000 people, and perhaps half of the area. Speaking from the economic point of view, moreover, these fragments were capable, if their old unity were maintained, of constituting a going concern, a viable State.

But this unity could not be preserved because the Czechs, having for three centuries waged war against their Austrian masters, were unwilling, now that freedom was in their grasp, to continue their old partnership, while the Slovak inhabitants of the Hungarian highlands cherished toward their Magyar masters a similar antipathy. It was always certain, therefore, that a Czecho-Slovak State would be created, and Paris merely welcomed a development it could not have prevented.

The Czecho-Slovak State thus created was in the main a possible economic unit. It had coal and iron, it had great industrial plants and a highly trained industrial population. Dependent upon the outside world for food, it still possessed the necessary resources to obtain this food, to barter its manufactures against the raw materials of other countries. In joining the eastern Carpathian countries to this new State the Paris conference unquestionably sinned against all economic and even political principles, but, aside from these areas, the Czecho-Slovak State recognized rather than created by the peace conference was compact and possible.

But the rise of the Czecho-Slovak State completed the ruin of the old Austrian fragment and gravely compromised the prospects of the torso of the old Magyar body, which still remained. Czecho-Slovakia could live without Austria, but Austria could not continue without it. As for Hungary, deprived of its highlands, brought down into the plains of the Danube and the Theiss, deprived of all fencible frontiers and separated from its old subjects in the eastern Carpathians, its future was dubious, while the plight of the highlanders themselves was even less attractive.

Such, then, in brief, is the story of the "balkanizing" of middle Europe and the origin of the Austrian question. When the Paris conference had completed its work there was left of Austria, which had been a kingdom of 116,000 square miles and had held a population of little less than 30,000,000 in 1914, a wretched fragment covering some 33,000 square miles and containing approximately 6,250,000 souls, practically all German speaking. This State was lacking in substantially all the resources necessary to an independent economic unit. It was without sea coast, its communications with the outside world were in the hands of hostile neighbors, it was both isolated and incapable of self-maintenance.

Vienna, Once a Political Capital, Is Without Industrial Support

A further circumstance complicated the problem. Of its 6,250,000 people more than a third, near 2,250,000, lived in the great city of Vienna. Compare this Austrian condition with that of Bavaria, which, with a slightly larger population (just 7,000,000), maintains in its capital, Munich, less than 600,000, or of Belgium, with a population of about 7,500,000, only 750,000 of whom live in Brussels, the capital, and the significance of the Vienna situation is made manifest. In truth, the explanation of the concentration of population in Vienna must be found, not in economic or industrial reason, but in the fact that the city has been for centuries the political capital of a great empire.

If you could conceive of the District of Columbia, in the United States, suddenly set apart from the rest of the country, with Washington deprived of its position as national capital, there would be established a parallel for the Viennese situation. Like Washington, Vienna was only in a small degree an industrial capital. It was beyond all else a political capital, deriving its prosperity from the presence of thousands of Government employees, as well as the residence of the sovereign and the court. As such a capital of one of the great European States it was a place of pilgrimage. In a word, its prosperity was due to political, not economic, factors primarily. But such economic and industrial prosperity as it enjoyed was the result of its ability to draw to its factory the raw materials of other portions of the empire.

But to-day Vienna is no longer the capital of a great empire. It is merely the capital of one of the insignificant States which the war has either created or permitted to survive. Prague, for example, as the capital of the new Czecho-Slovak State, has a political importance vastly greater, since the new State of the northern Slavs has twice as large a population as the old Austrian-German fragment. There is no longer occupation or pay for that vast fraction of the Viennese population which constituted the ruling and administrative elements in the Hapsburg empire.

Exactly in the same way the industrial plants of Vienna have lost their value, for they are deprived of the necessary raw materials, which came from regions now constituting a portion of one of the so-called Succession States. All of these States, moreover, are withholding these raw materials to favor their own industrial plants and shutting out Viennese productions by tariff walls. In the past Vienna has been favored by every sort of law, which discriminated against Prague and all other provincial cities and fostered and favored Viennese industrial plants. But now the various provincial cities become parts of new States and, more advantageously situated with respect of raw materials, are reversing the process.

The Great City, Impotent, Drags Down Rest of Austria

The result has been the development of the condition now existing in Austria. Aside from Vienna it is probably true that the Austrian fragment could persist. Its agricultural lands are fertile, its population could feed itself and measurably meet its economic needs. But saddled with Vienna, for whose vast popuipation there is no resource, Austria has steadily sunk and its population, particularly the population of Vienna, lives to-day only on the charity of the world, and in spite of this charity, under conditions which almost pass the power of description. The truth is that two-thirds of this great population in the former Hapsburg capital must emigrate or perish and that it cannot now emigrate, lacking all means for meeting the expenses of such enforced migration.

Here, then, are the elements in the Austrian problem. Now, what are the possible solutions? They are three in number—first, union with the German Republic; second, union with Hungary; third, association with both Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia in some form of Danubian confederation which shall at least have a common tariff frontier if no real political unity. Aside from these three solutions there is only the prospect of the rapid decline of Vienna, in part sustained by the charity of the world, which cannot continue at its present volume. This decline, moreover, promises the appearance of other problems, the not impossible arrival of anarchy and of Bolshevism, the development of a new sore spot in the middle of Europe.

Union with Germany, however, the simplest solution on the merely theoretical side, is prevented by certain political circumstances. It was specifically forbidden in the Treaty of St. Germain, which regulated the Austrian situation, at the instance of France, because the French for obvious reasons opposed the addition of more than 6,000,000 of people to the population of Germany, since the German population, which, even after the losses of the war, exceeds that of France by 50 per cent. (60,000,000 to 40,000,000), and will not impossibly be twice as great in less than a half century. Such a disproportion would clearly menace French security, particularly in view of the present German attitude toward France.

Aside from the question of Austria itself such a union would doom Czecho-Slovakia, which includes a larger German speaking minority, 3,500,000 in 13,000,000, since it would practically surround the new State by German territory and place in German hands all the important railway communications with the outside world. It would also bring Germany down into the Danube area, give it a frontier marching with that of Hungary and open the way for an ultimate restoration of that German-Austrian-Hungarian association which was the foundation of the great conception of Mitteleuropa, so nearly realized in the last war.

It is a fact that there is considerable Austrian sentiment in favor of such a union and the principle of self-determination is invoked to forward the demand of certain Austrian elements for union with Germany. But the French maintain this is a transitory condition and point out with justice that even union with Germany would do little to cure the main evil in the Austrian situation, namely, the Viennese condition, for Germany has no surplus of food and is unlikely to surrender much of her precious raw material to save Vienna at the expense of German industrial plants.

In any event France has the power, under the Treaty of St. Germain, and the present determination to veto the projected union with Germany. But there remains the possibility of economic as contrasted with political union. This project was advanced by John Maynard Keynes in his famous book in which he went to the length of envisaging a tariff union between Germany, Czecho-Slovakia and Austria, with a possible extension to Hungary and the Baltic States. As far as Czecho-Slovakia is concerned, such a project would be instantly rejected. Limited to Austria, it would rouse French protest and veto, for the French vividly recall that such an economic union was the first step in the accomplishment of the political union of Germany in the last century.

Union Is a Menace to France, Great Britain Favors It

We have, then, a French veto to the union of Austria with Germany, which seems to be immutable and can control. It is necessary to note, however, that both Italy and Great Britain favor such a union. Italy, because she is haunted with the dread of a future reintegration of the Austrian Empire, which would threaten her position upon the Adriatic acquired by the war, and also because she desires to have a common frontier with Germany as well as with France, since she looks forward to future friendliness with Germany rather than with her French rival in the Mediterranean and in North Africa. As to Great Britain, her support of the projected union is based upon a desire to see economic stability restored in central Europe and her recognition that the increase in German population constitutes no menace to her.

As to the second proposal, a union of Hungary with Austria, this instantly awakens violent Italian opposition because it might lead to the later reconstitution of the whole Hapsburg Empire, the hereditary enemy and rival of the Savoy monarchy. Nor is the opposition of Jugo-Slavia, Czecho-Slovakia and Rumania, States which have acquired great areas of old Hungarian and Rumanian territory, less pronounced, since such a union would instantly challenge the recent settlement and strengthen Magyar resolution to regain lost provinces, particularly from Rumania and Czecho-Slovakia.

Finally the third proposal, a customs union between Czecho-Slovakia, Austria anu Hungary, falls to the ground for exactly the same reasons, plus the certain refusal of Czecho-Slovakia to participate. To such a union that State would contribute the largest benefits and her enemies would derive from it the largest profits, while still threatening her integrity and challenging her existence. If France vetoes the projected union with Germany Italy would assuredly forbid political union with Hungary or economic association with Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia. Moreover, the elements now in control of Hungary are totally reactionary and therefore hostile to the dominating groups in Vienna.

A Receivership for Austria Will Not Solve Problem

For the moment, then, the Austrian mess seems insoluble. The economic necessities are patent, but, as in many other cases, the political complications prevent the application of the only conceivable remedies. To be sure, arguments are being presented to the French seeking to convince them that the union of Austria with Germany would strengthen South Germany and thus weaken the Prussian ascendancy. But these arguments fall to the ground now, when Bavaria has become the centre of exactly the ideas and leaders who in all of Germany best represent the old Junker militaristic ideas.

The fate of Austria, like that of most of Europe, seems after all locked up with the question of French security. You may discuss each of the myriad of Continental problems by itself as long as you choose, but in the end it will be patent that any solution is contingent upon the discovery of some method of insuring France against a new German aggression following the restoration of Germany to strength. It is perfectly idle to argue as Keynes and all his followers and disciples have, that economic circumstances impose economic solutions. Until the political barriers are removed it is impossible to deal with the economic phases.

Much of the Austrian misery is inevitable. Even if Austria be joined to Germany there will be no certain salvation for the vast population of Vienna, the reason for whose existence in the old Hapsburg capital has disappeared with that empire. Moreover, to restore the empire, even in part, is expressly forbidden by Italy. Thus the fate of Vienna seems to be determined by the decision of its ancient rivals, Paris and Rome.

As to the transfer of the whole Austrian State to League of Nations control, or, more exactly, receivership, this is rather an argument of despair designed to persuade the French or prevail upon the British and Italians to coerce the French into consenting to the union with Germany than a probability in fact, since it could lead nowhere precisely as long as French or Italian policy remained unchanged.

Dry Wave Gives Unction to Dancing Craze

Critics Who Thought the Night of the One Step and Fox Trot Was Over Have Another Thought Coming

By FRANK VREELAND.

PROHIBITION has done its share to change the face of Nature. It has turned the free lunch counters, almost the bulwark of American democracy, into cafeterias, where coffee sometimes runs as high as ten cents and where ham and eggs in places are well nigh beyond the dreams of avarice. But, unique alteration of all, it has replaced booze on many hotel menus with candy, so that bonbons may now be the evening chaser.

The liqueur order was in the past counted upon by numerous hostelries to raise the dinner to the financial level of a gilt edged security, as even Aunt Wappinger up in Vermont knew. To put it coarsely, they cleaned up on the hard stuff. But now at the McAlpin and other leading boarding houses one is expected to turn for stimulus to the caramels. They have added elaborate lists of confections to their menus, so that one could make up a ten course meal on sweetmeats if one had no respect for one's own inner plumbing.

The surprising thing is that the innovation has caught on, and candy is on every one's lips. The hotels report large sales—the candy addicts seem to like the stuff. Americans, already noted for their wholesale dissipation in this respect, appear to be running wild among the bonbons. Presently such excesses may elicit the attention of the blue law agitators.

One explanation given for the increased popularity of candy during the last year is the novelty for many of eating it right off the bill of fare at dinner instead of scrunching it at matinees or Saturday night parties. Another is the oft mentioned observation that in antediluvian times a man who could get his beer rarely found any solace in maple kisses. It is hard to imagine such a man discovering any excitement in candy now.

It must be pathetic enough to friends of the Old Guard of saloon shock troops to see these erstwhile noble vessels standing wistfully at the Claridge bar and tanking up on a frosted vanilla. But it must a sight to draw tears from Bacchus to view a hard boiled egg at the McAlpin on a spree among the marshmallows.

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Dancing is coming back with a resounding clatter. There has not been such a furore over the gentle art of tripping the light fantastic toe—yours or some one else's—since the Castles set New York dizzy and caused grandpa to have his set of false teeth fastened in more securely. And upholders of the old order, when a bottle was an object of respect and not something to contain mere mineral waters, remark bitterly that if those guys that brought on the dry wave complain about the dancing wave they have only themselves to blame. The upholders of the old order wash their hands of them.

They point out moodily that in the old days they were content to become just plain tight, without any dancing trimmings. But now they say you can't become fairly glowing without taking strenuous exercise, when it is difficult to maintain both your glow and your balance. They explain that previously you could get your skinful in a cafe, but now the cabarets are the only places where you can get some of the real old prune juice without having to bring your own coroner along. But usually at such resorts they are lured from the straight path of drinking and into the mazy morass of dancing and such wayward exhibitions. So many of them have to earn their booze by the sweat of their brow.

Be that as it may, it was recognition of the growth in favor of dancing that led Salvain and Thompson to turn Rector's, of yore the lively nocturnal residence of many a New Yorker who didn't care to take his at home, the haunt of the one-step and the fox-trot. The lower floor has seceded to commerce and the second story is a dancing palace, the Cafe de Paris, guaranteed to be pure and simple, Churchill's, the Strand Roof, the Palais Royal, the Hotel Majestic and others feature dancing, and the cabaret entertainment has really come to be a secondary consideration, no matter how great a loss that may mean to art. Some places have eliminated these high priced performers—Dorothy Dickson and Carl Hyson at the Palais Royal, for instance, get $2,500 a week—and they rely solely on a writhing orchestra that makes you not personally responsible for your feet.

A new race of hostesses has arisen. Already disputes are arising as to whether Miss So-and-So is as good as Miss Such-and-Such was in her time—the history of hostesses has begun. The girls who first introduced New Yorkers to their pedal extremities have passed out—and it's harder nowadays to work up a weeping jag over their going. Men don't cry into their beer the way they used to—it's too precious.

Justine Johnstone was one of the ranking ten in this industry when it started. Now she has signed articles as the wife of Walter Wanger, theatrical manager, and taken to presiding over the movies. In fact, it was through her functioning as hostess at the Little Club that her acquaintanceship with Mr. Wanger ripened into something more enduring and expensive. Sophie Tucker is no longer the life of Reisenweber's, and there is a great vacancy there. Joan Sawyer, and Grace Field have left this particular sphere of usefulness. But the places of the absentees have been taken, and a shortage of hostesses is one privation that nobody is worrying about.

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Ice skating seems to have waned in general esteem—perhaps one season of bumps was enough for the enthusiastic novices. Though the number of rinks hasn't diminished—and Charlotte is reported to be a likely performer at the Hippodrome again next season—the patronage isn't what one might expect at Iceland in view of the great hordes one saw there three years ago determined to wobble on skates in a masterly fashion or skin their noses in the attempt. Roller skating appears to be coming back a bit, and St. Nicholas Rink, once the stronghold of the steel blades, has switched from prize fighting to the manly art of learning how to sit down gracefully on wheels. Roller skating may supersede ice in popularity, for besides being an all year sport it is much easier to learn how to stand up on rollers and, once up, to stay put.

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A young actor playing on West Forty-second street in a theatre near "Tickle Me" was bragging to Frank Tinney the other day of the superior drawing power of his piece to that of Tinney's show.

"I'll bet since we came along," he said, "you've noticed your audiences have dropped away."

"I'll bet we have," agreed Tinney promptly. "I've been wondering until you spoke why our gallery attendance has fallen off so terribly."

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One of the longest strikes known to Broadway has been raging in a side street against a restaurant with scarcely any one, let alone the restaurant patrons, being the wiser for four months. Maybe it's not a sustained strike—perhaps the help inside return to their jobs and strike spasmodically to keep in practice. Where they get the strike fund is a mystery unless they are being supported by the munificence of some hotel porter whose tips have put him in a position to support his own chicken farm in luxury.

At any rate, pickets may still be seen parading up and down in front of the restaurant wearing sandwich signs, one of the most interesting of which reads: "What the Actors Equity Is to the Actors, Waiters Union No. —— Is to the Waiters." A hint of professionalism is seen here, for some of the grub rustlers are quite likely at one time to have interpreted Shakespeare. Actors are known to be ennobling the art of waiting on table at such a time as the present, when the public seems to think that a ham on the table is worth two on the stage. A man connected with the theatrical business was talking a few days ago about where all the bad actors go when the cold of the outer darkness envelops them.

"During these days," he said, "when shows are piling up on the rocks out on the road and actors are being deported back to Broadway in streams, a lot of them, I know, are getting jobs as waiters or bus boys, or even washing dishes to keep their art alive. Some of them, when they're finally convinced that not even legislation could get them accepted by the public, become press agents—and good ones, too, for they know how to stall. A few turn to farms, braving the privations of getting up at an hour when they used to be thinking they'd catch pneumonia unless they went to bed at that time. Some get jobs as dressers for stars who can still afford more than a temperament. But many a player goes into office work, often with theatrical firms that thought nothing of his ability to act but have respect for his ability to lick stamps.

"The actor in the past when out of an engagement would either become a charge on his relatives and friends or else starve magnificently in a garret. I wonder if they ever burned their newspaper clippings when they needed to keep warm? But the modern American actor is changed—he's more businesslike and intelligent, generally, so he's willing to undergo the monotony of sticking to a desk all day for the sake of the monotony of eating three square meals a day. Maybe that's why we put on a business play here with such an air of authenticity—the young clerk in the stage office seems actually to know just how to add up a set of figures incorrectly."

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Business houses report that the male employees are getting to work more punctually than they did before prohibition—so apparently pinochle parties haven't the grip on a man's time that the old stag racket did. On the other hand, the girl workers in the last year appear to be coming in later than ever, and one of the biggest companies in the country on lower Broadway has recently installed a feminine efficiency expert to see that the girls arrive with a little leeway for powdering their noses before beginning the battle of life for the day. Such tardiness is gallantly ascribed to the men. The eligible young gentlemen are again numerous since the war ended, and with a great possibility of being drawn into matrimony the girls don't care so much about their positions when they expect to marry into a life job almost any day.

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Business men often shun a talk with newspaper men, just as actors don't. A banker of German extraction shook angrily at a reporter the other day a paper in which an interview of the day before was quoted.

"I tell you nossing," the financier shouted, "and you get dot wrong!"

Hell's Kitchen Goes

ORDERS were posted on the big bulletin board in Police Headquarters a few days ago ending the existence of the West Thirty-seventh street police station and instructing the officers in command of the two stations nearest adjoining—the West Forty-seventh, and the West Thirtieth—to absorb the old territory.

Coming at the height of a "crime wave," the wiping out of an entire police precinct seemed to be a surprising action. In the department, however, not even the cantankerous veterans who now and then gnaw inwardly at the brain functionings of the "big chief" and who will, on persuasion, voice their true feelings, were disposed to criticise the order. It meant that "Hell's Kitchen," once the most notorious of all gang rendezvous of a gang ridden city, had been blotted out of police record, and out of police mind.

The old timers had seen it coming. The old station house near the Ninth avenue corner, a police stronghold since 1870, which, according to the department tradition had housed in its time more murderers and cutthroats than any other precinct station of the city, had of late years been degraded to penning in petty thieves and weak boy bandits. The master gunmen had at last been rounded up and packed off up the river for long terms, and their followers scattered.

Cops had to walk post by twos in the fierce, gun fighting days, and even then they walked in expectation of being showered from above with bricks, or shot at by a slinking murderer crouched in a doorway.

It was Owney Madden's famous stamping ground, held in fief by might of speaking revolvers and flashing knives. The Gophers sometimes contested this clannishness, and gang wars resulted that made famous reading, and many casualties, but back in 1914 Owney himself fell into police hands and was sent away by a Judge in General Sessions for a fourteen year bit. "Hell's Kitchen," which two years before had begun to experience the throes of a reform movement backed by John D. Rockefeller, who put up a $250,000 settlement house, turned over a new leaf from that moment.

The district, roughly, extended west of Ninth avenue to the river between Thirtieth and Forty-second streets, the neighboring gang to the south being the still famous Hudson Dusters. "Tanner" Smith was the last gunman of "Hell's Kitchen" to gain newspaper notoriety, and he was murdered by his best friend more than a year ago—over a woman, it was supposed. But "Tanner" Smith's case was the only big incident of the more peaceful days that had befallen.

Trains of freight cars moved undisturbed over the Chelsea tracks, and the switchmen who used to pack revolvers "case of trouble turning up," leaned on their flag sticks and came out of their shanties at night to shoo children from the path of locomotives. There was a time when the children did not play at night in that district, and when they became accustomed to listening for the sickening crack that meant another killing was on. Then would come the police reserves, rushing heavily, firing volley upon volley and breaking down doors. But the new generation is not a Huck Finn clan and has never smelled the smoke of gun battle.

"Battle Row," which was the term applied to Thirty-ninth street at Eleventh avenue, has been unmarked by bullets for a dozen years. The "Forty Thieves," roysterers who used to crack heads of comrades with beer bottles when no greater amusement was stirring, disappeared without forming an alumni association, and the end has come.